

The history of migration between rural South Mozambique and South Africa, from colonial times to independence and post-apartheid, shows how migration patterns of rural families deeply evolve over time. Shifting and relatively complex combinations of drivers, rooted in the regional political economy and a range of more local and social factors, result in a strong and sometimes very quick adaptation capacity of rural migrants. In the last 15 years, renewed migration drivers and patterns have resulted in a growing differentiation of rural livelihoods.

### CIRCULAR MINE MIGRATION UNDER COLONIAL RULE

The huge labour needs of the thriving South African mining sector led to a specific agreement being signed in 1897 between the Portuguese colonial power and the Transvaal government for the provision of workers. The bilateral cooperation system was improved in 1928 with a convention ensuring the provision of Mozambican labour in exchange for taxes and incomes for the workers, whose return to their place of origin was enforced after each contract. This policy, targeting rural men, established the South region as a labour reserve. In the 1940–1950s, about 1/3 of active males in Inhambane Province were in South African mines, and to a lesser extent, on plantations. With wages up to 300% higher than those offered by Portuguese companies and planters under the existing forced labour system (*xibalu*), workers' choice was obvious: it was a way to escape both *xibalu* and an exploitive *hut tax*.

Regular short-term circular migration between the main gold and coal mining areas (mostly in Transvaal state) and rural localities of south Mozambique was the dominant migration pattern. In places such as Leonzoane (Massinga District), it concerned 65% of men. A minor pattern was the migration of men under the *xibalu* system towards Mozambican cities and harbours (Maputo, Beira, Chimoio) for handling and railways construction, or agricultural labour (cotton, sugar).

With men spending more than 50% of their working lifetime in South Africa, this migration system translated into a deep restructuring of family labour and farm activities. It gave rise to prevalent 'peasant-miner' livelihoods in which men were engaged in low-wage labour, and women and children maintained a subsistence system at home.

### LONG-TERM MIGRATION IN THE TROUBLED EARLY INDEPENDENCE

The independence of Mozambique in 1975 radically changed power relations between the new Marxist-oriented government and the apartheid regime. This initiated a period of economic and military destabilization by

South Africa (and Rhodesia) that quickly shifted prior migration patterns.

First, South Africa cut labour migration enrolment to the mines: from 1975 to 1976, the recruitment of miners in south Mozambique dropped by about two-thirds. Second, in the early 1980s, new economic and military actions contributed to undermining the socialist project that relied on state-owned farms producing for export and domestic food needs. Foreign-backed attacks led to the destruction of main national infrastructure, as well as disruption of economic flows. Moreover, the development of the *Mozambican National Resistance* resulted in guerrilla activities that affected rural areas and prevented any regular agricultural production. When destabilization reached larger parts of the countryside from 1982, economy and agricultural production collapsed and about half of the country's population became dependent on external food relief. Exacerbating this situation, natural hazards (1982–1985 droughts) also affected food production.

Population movements within Mozambique increased. In 1984, people were fleeing violence. Gradually, over 1/3 of the population was forced to leave their land, move to cities or military-protected rural areas, or flee abroad as refugees. At the end of the war in 1992, an estimated 1 million Mozambicans had died, about 1.5 million had taken refuge abroad, and 4 to 5 million more had been internally displaced. These movements and families' choices were also strongly determined by existing kin and social networks, within Mozambique or in South Africa, where many mining migrants had stayed after independence. In Leonzoane, 82% of the people had left, either to Massinga, Maputo or South Africa, helped by their networks, but leaving their land and possessions behind.

In this troubled context, new migration patterns emerged. Long term domestic migration increased as a consequence of limitations of displacements due to war. In Leonzoane, 70% of households just moved once within Mozambique or to South Africa, with rare home returns; others did a two-step migration, within the country and then to South Africa, with no return, at least until the end of the war. Local livelihoods were further impacted upon, with a lesser contribution of males to agriculture and a growing role for the informal sector.

### DIVERSIFIED CIRCULAR MIGRATION LED BY LIBERALIZATION AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

With the end of warfare (1992) and apartheid (1994), new drivers reshaped migration. Economic growth in democratic South Africa did not provide enough jobs for the black low-skilled labour force. High unemployment and the development of poorly paid and informal jobs directly impacted upon migrants from rural Mozambique, since they were likely to compete with unemployed local workers. Foreign miners, hit by large job losses in the 1990s, had no choice but to enter sub-contracting, casualization and undocumented labour.

In Mozambique, the government had turned to a market-oriented economy. The new economic growth occurred with strong inequalities, rising rural poverty, and the broad family farming sector lacking the needed support. Migration remained an option for many, but mostly towards the South African informal economy. Despite South Africa's new immigration laws offering migrants more rights, authorities clearly discouraged permanent immigration and the result was an increase of undocumented migrants.

With peace, people were able to move again – helped by improved infrastructure and communication. Refugees who decided to stay in South Africa or in Mozambican cities have been consolidating social networks with their relatives in rural areas. Stronger and more complex linkages between places and people led to the expansion of new migration patterns toward a diversity of circular movements. Two-step migration patterns, national and then international, with home returns or short term visits, have developed. These profiles are the more mobile and reflect multi-sites, with shifting residences. The numbers of long-term national or international migration has also increased. This comes with new routes towards locations within the traditional mining areas and outside (in the Eastern and Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal).

These renewed patterns of migration are reshaping rural livelihoods as part of adaptation strategies to a liberalized context where informal and volatile labour conditions prevail. They result in increasing livelihoods' differentiation in terms of income and activities, between migrants and non-migrant households – being the poorest – and between migrants.

This multilevel, unsteady and complex nature of drivers of rural migration, as well as the development of circular migration in Southern Africa and their significant contribution to rural livelihoods, call for their consideration as a transversal issue in national development policies. It also requires adapted regional migration governance structures to take advantage of the development potential of migration for the region.

Fig.10.1: Diversity of migration patterns and household livelihoods: trajectories from Massinga district (1992-2010)

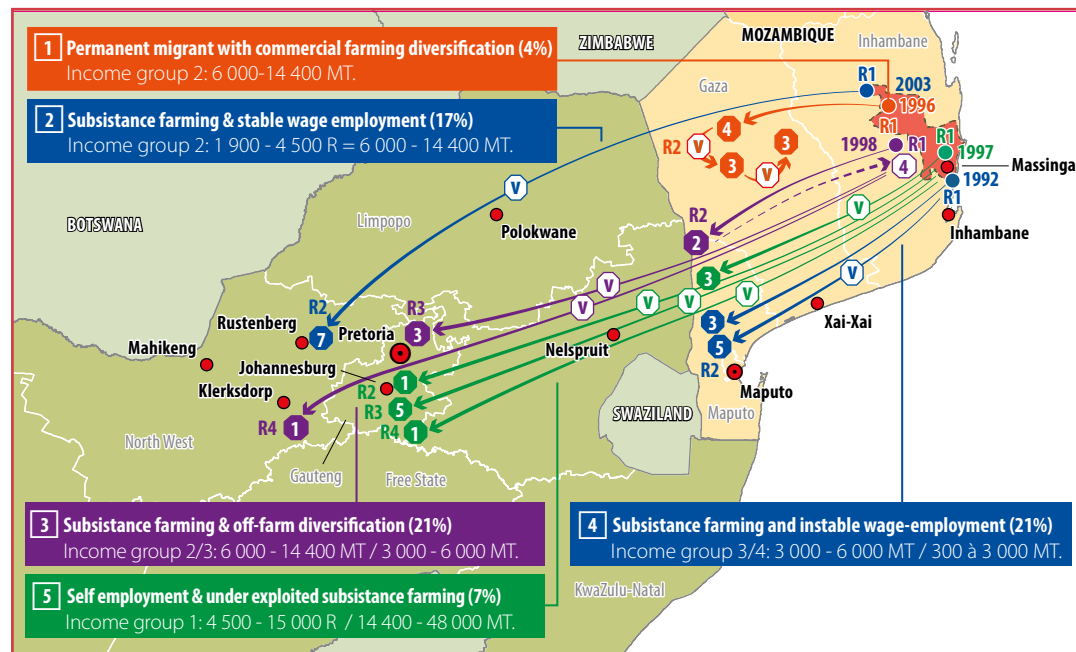


Fig.10.2: Shifting migration patterns from Inhambane province (1897-2010)

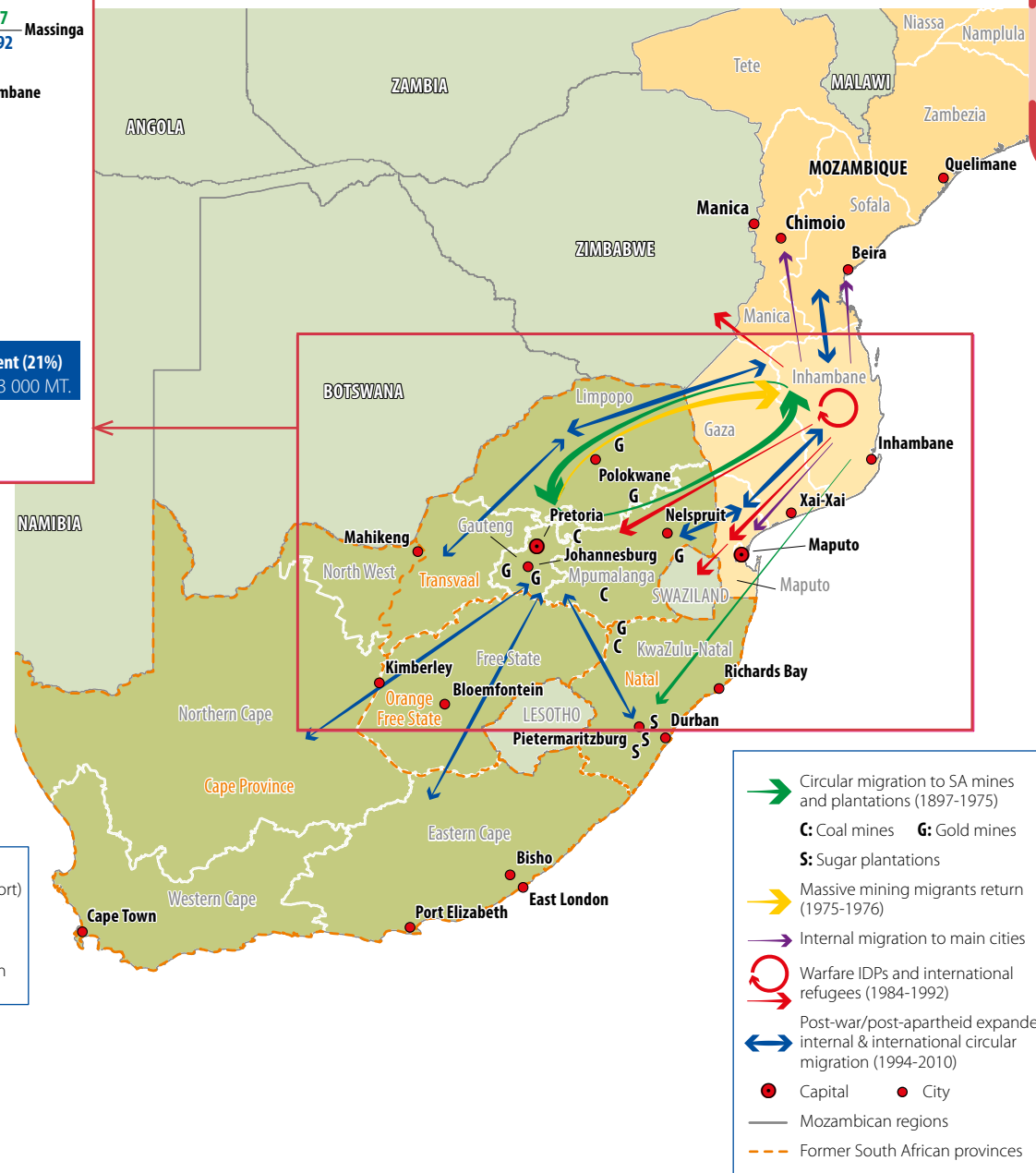


Fig.10.3: Type of support provided to migrants by kinship or social networks (Massinga district)

